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PERSONAL HISTORIES BY
FORMER CIA SPOUSES WRITTEN TO
SUPPORT 1982 LEGISLATION

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Wives' Personal Histories

To prepare a data base for the legislation, approximately 30 women--all former or current wives of CIA overseas officers--wrote moving accounts of their personal experiences overseas. The stories varied in details, but the message in all was the same, "We did what we were asked to do--by our husbands, by other officers of the U.S. Government. We were glad to help our husbands, of course, but we were also proud to serve our Agency and our country. We wanted to make the world a better place for our children. So we did what we were told to do--as loyal Americans we were glad to do so."

Portions of the histories were read aloud at the hearings and caused great interest. Mr. Colby described the written testimony as "book material."

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Thank you for the history. It was just what we needed. And we do appreciate your time and effort in producing it. We are slowly receiving them, but still need more. Surprisingly few histories have been written--5 to date--and I feel our cause is weak if we say that 65 women need legislative help, but only 5 have had enough interest in the matter to write something about their lives abroad.

One of the very real problems that must be overcome is the belief that overseas wives do nothing but sit around, drink tea, and ring for servants. We also must convince that we are particularly deserving for assistance for us now, rather than waiting until some such time--if ever--in the future that all American wives are given retirement rights. Most of us feel that overseas spouses earn a retirement, but unless we tell Congress what we did to earn that annuity, they will continue to believe that we lived as leeches.

So we are grateful that your history has come and that it is such a good one. I will turn in all that I have shortly and get them cleared in time for the hearing. We will be using extracts for our testimony. That will be much stronger, I think, when I can demonstrate that still more CIA spouses have something to show in the way of contributions to the overseas mission.

The hearing is still on for 12 September 1984. Should you know of any other wives who would write histories or be willing to help with correspondence, please let them and me know. I'll be glad to send explanatory materials.

Meanwhile, I will write you of further developments. We have been told that CIA is supportive of our issue. With that help and the help of the committees, we are hopeful that legislative remedies will be provided--if not this session, then early in 1985. We shall try for this term. It is an election year. The good is that some Republicans need a women's issue. The bad is that everybody is so busy. Still our chances are good for final success. If everybody helps, our chances improve.

Again, thank you for this important help. It is great to have.

Sincerely,



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